1/9/71

Dear Sylvia,

With the spirit of your letter of the 7th I have and can have no disagreement. With some of the formulations I do. I begin with the assurance that you will not have to call upon Paul for copies of the documents. We have made other, more immediate and better arrangements of a cooperative nature and if they fall through, which I consider extremely unlikely, I have obtained the promise of fund with which I can buy them. However, for problems your detachment from the more recent work may make seem unclear, even unlikely to you, after giving Hoch a rather rough time for his seeming effort at cooperation, I did go to work on this. In fact, I was concerned abouth an entirely different aspect before the problem he created, and had started seeking funds before he drafted his letter. It may not be easy for you to understand, but I will undertake to try and explain it.

Some of the stuff should never have been declassified. It is clearly wrong, legally, ~~ethically~~ morallyand ethically, for it to be available, and is of a nature that will attract the more irresponsible among us (you and I have disagreements about who is irresponsible). Some should never have been declassified to begin with. Some is factually inaccurate, in a way that will attract some to seek immediate publicity for it. Some, as you understand, can foreclose further investigation if used (and the problem here is for those who are not currently really active, who have not been able to keep up to date with what others have done and are doing, to begin to understand that this is both possible and probable-there have already been cases).

Yet there is great value, especially in the stuff I have been pushing so hard for and had gone through the preliminaries of filing suit for. Some of the declassifications are by no means spontaneous. This has been a consistent device, to resist me to the degree possible then to make the stuff available for predictable misuse. There have been numerous such cases. It is late, I've had a long hard day (working on preparations for a Ray hearing), and I can't begin to go into such things. I assume you'll believe me. These have been repeated cases of this, carried to the point where the redrafting of internal communications were dictated by one agency to another.

There is considerable hazard and considerable value. With respect to my work, it is as accessible and attractive as a ripe fruit hanging. Yet there is nobody else able to fully understand it, carry it further-do anything constructive with it without working with me-and none are. Hoch was, to a degree, in the past. (N.O. materials.) While I recognize that none of us own this, I would like the day to come when others recognize that there should be some rights vested in him who does the work, for odds and ends of bits and pieces that can be published (to no presently-constructive end) not to be taken, even if innocently by the uninformed if well intentioned, and effectively end with nothingess long work of considerable promise.

Your argument on independce is understandable, but have you really thought it through? Are you not saying what in some cases means others cannot enjoy their independence? How can such situations be reconciled, how can conflicts be avoided, if there is but one-sided independence? Is it, in fact, really independence?

There is much at stake of which you have and can have no concept, not for lack of intelligence or anything of that sort, but simply because you have not been and cannot be part of it. Your work alone precludes it (and in some cases your concept of "independence"). To a considerable degree your work makes you more of the past than the present and the future, and this is not and is not indended as either criticism or reflection upon you, your brilliant work or your capabilities that, if they can be equalled, cannot be exceeded. It is a simple fact of the life you have to lead. And of ours, where I just can't take the time to keep others as informed as once I did, and I again note when confronted with what you call "independence" and I regard as something else. One area, and a significant one, is legal - in court. Misuse that in one case Mitchell personally prepared for, with unquestionable illegality can be the most effective legal barried to the release of the

even more significant still-withheld and the most effective government argument against suits filed, on appeal, ready for filing and in preparation. In plain English, some of this is booby-trapped, and as brilliant as you are, you could go over it with care and not be able to detect it. When I consider what the irresponsible and the irrational can do....It is of such a nature that Bud has conceded some of his people should not have access, and this troubles him deeply.

What is available is available, and there is nothing that can be done about that. However, it is entirely a different matter to facilitate its availability to those who can be expected to misuse it or to kill it. I have been responsible for some of this, until I learned the bitter lesson, to the degree that Mary criticized me severely for excessive freedom with my materials when she was here, and I fear she was right.

We are past the point where, much as we might want to, those of us who continue to labor can afford to satisfy the natural curiosity of those who are no longer active. I haven't written some in years. Others just are not in a position to do meaningful work, though they are capable of it and would like to. This has become much too grim, much too serious, and too enormous an investment has been made.

As happens in life, there is a new generation, some of whom are doing really worthwhile things, entirely or almost entirely unknown to most of the original "critics". It is not right that their considerable efforts should be jeopardized by the lack of knowledge of the old timers who have no way of knowing that they can and do present this kind of jeopardy....We are so much farthur in our information, understanding, contacts and potentialities than you have any way of knowing, and I am not saying that you would consciously do anything that might jeopardize any ot it. But how can you realize you may be jeopardizing that of which you have no knowledge?

Let me take your words, "So far as the declassified CD's are concerned, I naturally will exercise my own judgement on...what use, if any, to make of them." Are you really in a position to make a judgement of the kind you certainly would want to? In too many cases I am satisfied you are not. Especially with the New Orleans stuff (and here we had better give thought to this stuff getting into hands that would deliver it to New Orleans). Were we still latched to the 26, there could be no question of your judgement, but that is now painfully far in the past.

Speaking personally, I have established relationships of great value and productivity that can be ruined by the innocent and pure in heart. In time you will come to know of this, but I can go no further now.

When you speak of making available "in the most effective form", we are in agreement but may not be in definition. I think no useful purpose is now served by an occasional story in a minor (or for the most part a major) paper, and that the most effective form is one in which all of the available evidence, not just an isolated piece that might strike someone's eye, is presented. We have a long history of stories that did nothing and a longer one of well-intended stories doing harm. That, too, is of the past, as I hope you will think through and come to agree.

You see, your words are fine, but even you, monumental as your work has been, cannot live by them, believe me, to the detriment of all of us and our work, because there are very few like you or with your capabilities. Please believe me when I tell you I deeply regret it is not possible for you to be working over some of my materials with me, for I do miss things you might not (and I have), you could see and understand what others cannot - because it could be so very helpful to me and to what we seek. For I cannot pretend that sometimes I also do not understand.

I dox wish you had not brought up those things that separate us, and in what I must regard as a less than fair or complete manner. There are some thing on which we all have blind spots. You are not immune. Where you talk of mutual respect, of course I agree this is the only basis. Yet you told Lifton what I asked you not to and I found out about it only because he was sufficiently indelicate to brag about it. When there are so many

serious problems to me coped with, why must our strong wills (and you have no monopoly- we all, including me, seem to have them) present another barrier, and further divide us, make genuine collaboration impossible in some cases?

Inherently you chide me for asking you to maintain confidence. Let me remind you of one case: you went off half-cocked, through understandable dislike of Garrison and I presume in part under Lifton's influence, on Thornley. I know what you do not. I felt that your interest required that I offer this information to you. But I could and would not do this without your promise of silence. There was nothing in this for me, except the loss of what you term "independence". I sought only to protect you from the possibilities of the future, and I could not have this broadcast or get back to Lifton, whose potentials you have yet to learn. On this, I tell you that what he has said of me that has come back to me (only because he went to far and challenged one who wouldn't believe it to confront me) is without exception false and in almost every case manufactured, without possibility of it being accidental. The same is true of what he says of Thornley, and here he has several hangups. But I haven't time or stomach for argument. You have no idea how I have wearied and aged, how much I have to do that just can't get to, how much I am into, on how many fronts. I risk a harsh judgement, but you will find it true and without exaggeration. I have in hand enough for at least six good books.

But I am exhausted, physically, and sometimes in other ways. The mere exigencies of life have become a major intrusion. This is the one quarter of the year in which we have any income. My wife is a tax consultant. I have to take her into town and bring her home, four trips a day, each pair an interruption that I have come to resent. I would like never to have to write a letter, to just sit and write the material I now have and understand. But, partly to recapture the integrity taken away from us by our "friends", I have also had to move time into the courts (and in most cases as my own lawyer). Another part is the production of what I've been seeking. (In some cases it is just handed to me, exclusively, believe it or not!) Some of the 1970 declassification is of this character. If you ever come here, you can see all the papers.

I'll have to stop. I can no longer claim the memory I once had, but I must comment on part of your close, where you saythat after Mary was here what I wrote you "was couched in rather intemperate terms and tended to be denunciatory and intimidative." I do not recall anything justifying this description, yet I may have said what can fairly be so described. I just do not think I had this intention or said it that way. The one thing I do recall is a fear that you might press Lifton too far over the line. He has hurt me much, I think in doing this he has also hurt our work-all of us. But I have never done anything against him and have from him first calls to me regarded him as a sick man. There is professional confirmation. He is very bright, just as unscrupulous, and that sick. I feared that pressure on him might be too much. I fear that once he does something he will be emptier. I believe he has delayed for this reason. He could have published long ago, and he surely has the competence. I am under no illusions about how bright he is. I have no desire, despite the hurt he has caused me, despite his infamous libels, for him to be sicker and even less for you to be the cause. Please believe me, whether you know it or not, he is sick and has been for a long time. As I try and think back about this, I think I may have also asked you to consider parts of your own record, what the youngsters call hangups. I am aware of some of mine. We are all frail. We are none imune. But you should know well enough how I feel about you to know that I never intended what you now call denunciation and I know you too well to think that youkean be intimidated. Aside from this, I am confident I never said anything that can be so interpreted, not fairly.

I wish I could pretend to know the answer on Hoch. I disagree with you, but I must confess I can give you no rational explanation. If I am wrong, I am wrong, but my own experience with him makes it impossible for me to believe he has gone over. Neither you nor I have a monopoly on either bullheadedness or hangups. Paul has done things of which I think you have no knowledge that make it impossible for me to agree with you. He alone has done them and they are important. This includes unmasking FBI informants and by sheer perseverance getting official confirmation. This is the other side?...I apologize for the even more numerous typose, but I'm just too tired. I wish you only the best. I hope you can conceive that the declassifications present hazards you may not detect and will not redistribute.